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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [SW](#) [LO](#) [UNSC](#)

SUBJECT: SWEDISH DG FOR POL AFFAIRS ON SWEDEN AND THE UN

1. On May 31, the Swedish Embassy in Bratislava hosted a seminar on Global Security and the United Nations (UN), in conjunction with the Slovak Foreign Policy Association, as part of their commemoration of the 100th anniversary of the birth of Dag Hammarskjöld. As part of the morning program, Ambassador Olof Skoog, Director General for Political Affairs at the Swedish Foreign Ministry, outlined his thoughts on recent UN failures, successes, and strategies that "smaller countries" like Sweden and Slovakia should keep in mind when sitting on the UN Security Council. The meeting was well-attended by European Ambassadors resident in Bratislava, academics, and Slovak government personnel.

SKOOG: UN COULD HAVE DONE MORE ON IRAQ

2. Skoog, who served as Executive Assistant to Hans Blix during the lead-up to Operation Iraqi Freedom, said that the UN is not free of blame for the "technically illegal" invasion of Iraq. He noted that while there were UN member states that were not willing to allow inspections to continue, the UN also was not willing to explore other options when it came to pressuring Saddam Hussein, such as the credible threat of force.

FRUSTRATED BY LACK OF DEFINITION FOR "TERRORISM"

3. Prescribing more involvement by "capitals" in the UN conflict resolution process, Skoog also described development as "key" to conflict resolution, and pointed out that there remain difficulties to overcome; the body, for example, still cannot accurately define "terrorism," due to what Skoog felt was a dragging of the feet by Arab states hesitant to object to suicide bombers in Israel. When it comes to suicide bombers, "Let's call it what it is," he suggested, "violence against civilians is terrorism." How can we fight evil, he asked, if we can't even call it by name?

WHAT THE UN NEEDS: REFORM AND MORE INVOLVEMENT BY "SMALL STATES"

4. Skoog said that Sweden does not sanction the preemptive use of force as was seen in Iraq. "We were against preemptive action in Russia against militants following the Beslan attack, and we were against its use in Iraq by the United States. But we should not hide behind the Charter when atrocities are occurring."

5. The UNSC must be reformed, he claimed, as the world has changed since the 1940's. While the G4 is calling for the creation of additional vetoes, Skoog said Sweden "is skeptical" as to whether giving the UNSC more seats and more vetoes will make the body more efficient. He also suggested that countries like Sweden and Slovakia take a higher profile, particularly regarding human rights, as violators "have to be engaged, but can't be given control of the process as is the case with Libya."

THAYER

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